

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KLINE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. EMANUEL addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Washington?

There was no objection.

AN AMERICAN STORY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, let me tell you an American story. While I will not mention her name, the person is real. The woman is retired and she receives about \$900 per month in Social Security. That is the average amount that a retired American receives.

So this is more than a story about the one person I know. This is a story about millions of people across America. Millions of retired Americans receive \$900 per month to pay for food, clothing, housing, health care and everything else.

The administration recently professed its intent to address the health care crisis in this country. The President said so in his acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention. The very next morning the administration announced a 17 percent increase in Medicare premiums. Seventeen percent is the largest increase in the history of Medicare.

Let me translate the increase into the every day life of an average senior citizen like the one I know drawing an average monthly payment. Over one-third, 37 percent of senior citizens entire monthly Social Security check will go to Medicare in 2006. That is just 2 years away. One-third of that \$900 is gone.

Now, if a senior is lucky they might have a family as this woman does who can give them some extra money each month. What about those without a family? What about the retirees who have seen their loved ones, their children struggle this these last 4 years without jobs or health care for themselves? After, all over the last 4 years 5 million Americans under the age of 65 have lost their health care coverage. Those who still have it are under increasing pressure from employers to pay more and more of premiums.

Every labor dispute is over health insurance. Companies like Ford and GM bluntly say they can not remain com-

petitive as things stand now. These are just the most recent headlines, the tip of the iceberg. The crisis gets deeper. Everyone in America today is either struggling with health care or knows someone who is.

Health care is an urgent national crisis, just like the drought we just heard about. But we are not treating it that way. If a category 5 hurricane were bearing down on us in the United States, as one really is, we would see bulletins in the media about the dangers to life and property. And we would see action by government to protect the citizens and get them out of harm's way.

Well, America's health care crisis is the perfect storm and it is already on shore wreaking havoc across this country. The damage to lives and property from health care crises is greater than a season of the greatest storms, yet we are forcing everyone to go it alone.

Here is one example. A law passed by the Republican leadership on behalf of the President forbids the Federal Government from negotiating lower prescription drug prices for American senior citizens. Never mind the other 250 million Americans who are getting no relief. When a health care plan announces a double digit increase, Americans have a choice, either pay or go without. When companies shift more of the health care burdens to employees, workers can either pay or go without. When half the bankruptcies in America today are from unpaid medical expenses democracy is at risk.

There is something fundamentally wrong in a society when people fail because they get sick. When an American gets sick the outcome ought to be health care that makes them well, not medical expenses that make them insolvent. But that is the way it is. When 37 percent, remember, of seniors total Social Security goes to Medicare premiums, when seniors spend another hundred or more dollars per month for supplemental coverage, when they have not included any cost for prescription drugs it begs the obvious.

How does someone buy food or shoes or pay for housing? Every senior citizen listening to me right now knows what I am talking about. When medical expenses take at least half of what a senior gets in Social Security, it is time to declare a medical emergency in U.S. health care coverage. It is time for universal health care.

As a medical doctor let me immediately vaccinate you from the certain administration attack. They will call it socialized medicine. And they will try to frighten the be-jesus out of you. That is standard procedure for the President and his surrogates. We do not say that about police and fire and roads and schools and everything else we do collectively. But with health care we say, you are on your own.

You should be afraid of what they have done over the last 4 years.

□ 2310

Nothing for you but lots for special interests like big drug companies. I

think the drug companies deserve to make a profit. I mean, they should make something. I also think senior citizens deserve to eat every day and not have to choose between medication and food, and I think every American has the right to get well without going bankrupt.

America needs a universal health care system designed, built and financed by Americans. We can look at what other Nations have done and learn from their mistakes and successes. We can create a universal health care system that is of the people, by the people and for the people. The President will call it socialized medicine; I call it "Made in America."

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KLINE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. HINCHEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. HINCHEY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. LEWIS of Georgia addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

TRIBUTE TO MR. LUTRELLE PALMER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise in tribute to the life and legacy of Mr. Lutrelle Palmer, better known as Lu, one of the greatest and most prolific journalists known in this country during the last half of the 20th century.

Mr. Palmer was born in 1922 in Newport News, Virginia. He attended the local schools, went to Virginia Union where he earned a bachelor's degree, then to Syracuse University where he was awarded a master's degree in communications. He then went on to the University of Iowa where he completed course work for a Ph.D. but lost his dissertation materials on a train and consequently never received his doctoral degree.

Lu worked for several newspapers and taught at a number of colleges and universities. He wrote for the Chicago Daily Defender, the Chicago Courier, the Chicago Daily News, the Tri state Defender, and he developed and owned

the Chicago Black X Express and wrote freelance articles for other newspapers and magazines.

Lu had a unique and provocative style of writing and was known as "the Panther with a pen." He spent 50 years informing, stimulating, motivating and activating the African American community as a reporter, syndicated columnist, newspaper publisher, radio commentator, activist, community organizer and political strategist.

Lu and Vernon Jarrett were black journalistic pioneers in Chicago in that they worked for mainline publications and major electronic outlets but always returned to the black press. Lu Palmer was a Black Nationalist who wrote and spoke eloquently and passionately about black plight, black needs, injustice and black hopes.

During the activist 1960s, Lu's pen and voice were read and heard all over America. When the police raided the Black Panther headquarters in Chicago and killed Fred Hampton and Mark Clark, Lu's articles were scathing. He was a leader in the successful effort to defeat then-Cook County State's attorney Edward Hahnrahan.

As a result of editorial interference, Lu eventually resigned from the Daily News and organized his own paper, the Black X Express. However, Lu was very selective in the kind of advertising that he would accept. Therefore, his paper only survived for a little more than a year.

Lu then got involved with radio journalism and developed Lu's Notebook, a hard-hitting editorial newscast which often ended with the phrase, "That's enough to make a Negro turn black."

Lu was now, for all practical purposes, a full-time activist. He was holding community forums, book reviews and seminars. He organized CBUC, Chicago Black United Communities, and then BIPO, Black Independent Political Organization, which held political education classes and trained hundreds of citizens to better understand and be involved in the political process.

After the death of Mayor Richard J. Daley, black activists and white political progressives in Chicago saw a crack in the dominant political machine, and Lu Palmer emerged as a leader in the effort to elect a black mayor in Chicago. While Lu was characterized as a black nationalist, he was also a coalition builder. He played a key role in the development of ProCan, the Progressive Chicago Area Network, which was made up of mostly blacks, young whites and Hispanics whose goals were good, clean, progressive and honest government.

Lu became so obsessed with understanding what a good black mayor could mean for Chicago that he was willing to lose sponsorship of his radio series, and he did. He organized forums, focus groups, rallies and eventually a plebiscite to convince then-Congressman Harold Washington to run for mayor. Mayor Jane Byrne had infuriated the black community with some

of her appointments to the school board and the Chicago Housing Authority, plus engineered the loss of Lu's radio series sponsorship from which came the slogan, "We shall see in '83."

Harold Washington agreed, ran for mayor and was elected. Lu ran for Harold Washington's vacated seat. Harold, as mayor, supported labor leader Charles Hayes and Charlie was elected. Lu was always a political independent, and after Harold Washington's death, Lu became even more disillusioned with local Democrats and helped Republican Jim Edgar to become governor of Illinois and had enough influence with the black or African American Illinois voters to make it happen.

Lu eventually became ill and retired from active public life, but helped his wife Jorja to operate the MENHELCO Group Home for boys which was founded in honor of their son Skipper who suffered from a disability and is now deceased.

Lu represented the best of what is a husband, father, teacher, journalist and lover of freedom, liberation, self-determination and race pride could exhibit. He was fiercely black, made no bones about it, and often referred to himself as being an African in America.

He leaves to mourn his wife, Jorja, and their children Trudy Palmer, Darien Simon, Karen English, Lu Palmer III, Jamie English, Junior, five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Lu Palmer, a man of principle, a man of the people, for the people and of the people. Lu Palmer, a man of greatness.

GOOD FRIDAY PEACE ACCORDS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, 6 years ago this past April, the people of Northern Ireland, Great Britain, and the republic of Ireland entered into a peace agreement, commonly referred to as the Good Friday Agreement. This legendary accord set out a framework that would allow Northern Ireland to govern itself and provide for a rule of law that was responsible to all people in the north of Ireland.

Unfortunately, 6 years later, much of the agreement has been stalled, derailed or simply never implemented.

Mr. Speaker, it is almost 2 years now since Prime Minister Blair suspended the power-sharing government of Northern Ireland, and almost 10 months have passed since elections were held in Northern Ireland to the Belfast Assembly. However, the peace agreement remains stalled and no elected Assembly members have been permitted to take their seats.

I believe it is essential that the Good Friday Accords be fully implemented for a true and lasting peace to be achieved in Northern Ireland. The Assembly must be reinstated immediately and let the process continue.

Later this week, we see our best opportunity for the reimplementation of these Accords.

All the parties to the agreement, including Sinn Fein, the DUP, and Prime Ministers Blair and Ahern, are set to meet at Leeds Castle to try and work out a solution to reinstate the Belfast Assembly and get the Good Friday Agreement back on track.

Recently, Prime Minister Blair was quoted in press reports stating that this may be the last chance to save the Good Friday Accords. Also, rumors are circulating that if an agreement is not made at Leeds, Prime Minister Blair will return Northern Ireland to direct rule of the British Government.

Mr. Speaker, this is simply unacceptable. While I agree that a solution must be found to reinstate the Accords, I think Prime Minister Blair's words may be too harsh. We cannot allow these monumental Accords to be just discarded. Too much hard work and negotiation has gone into the process, and we are too close to a final peace to just throw it all away.

However, the negotiations at Leeds do give me great hope. Having all parties at the same table in a formal setting with only peace as a priority is the most positive development since the elections were announced more than a year ago.

□ 2320

Now it is up to Prime Ministers Blair and Ahern to force the hand of Reverend Paisley and the DUP, the Democratic Union Party, ensuring that any deal brokered is in fact in good faith. Ian Paisley and the DUP have been holding the peace agreement in Northern Ireland hostage for too long. All other parties are ready to reinstate the Assembly and the Good Friday Accords. Blair and Ahern cannot allow this radical party to continue to halt the peace process.

I am concerned if Prime Minister Blair does not keep the DUP in check during these negotiations, the Good Friday Accords will fall by the wayside.

Mr. Speaker, while the DUP is a major political party in Northern Ireland, their constituency is not so large that they should be able to stop the peace from progressing. I want to remind Mr. Blair that he has the ability and the means to implement the Accords with or without the cooperation of Reverend Paisley and the DUP. The Good Friday Accords have been approved by the voters of Northern Ireland, Great Britain, and the Republic of Ireland. Prime Ministers Blair and Ahern have a responsibility to exercise the people's will.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would say that the Good Friday Accords are the vehicle to peace, and no matter the circumstance, the leaders in Great Britain, Northern Ireland, and the Republic of Ireland should not walk away from the process. We are too close to peace to let it all fall apart.